

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In accordance with the present invention, viral proteins that are responsible for membrane fusion and syncytium formation induced by three different fusogenic 5 orthoreoviruses, i.e., avian reoviruses (ARV), Nelson Bay virus (NBV), and Baboon Reovirus (BRV), have been identified. The genes encoding these proteins have been cloned and sequenced; functional analysis thereof indicates that expression of these proteins in transfected cells 10 results in cell-cell fusion.